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A Voice Eloquent in Death

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to

William Edwin Hoy

MISSIONARY

Hoy, W. E.

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A Memorial Service

held

BY THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

in the

CHAPEL OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 1927, at 3 P. M.

COMMEMORATING
THE LONG AND FAITHFUL SERVICE OF

William Edwin Hoy

MISSIONARY TO JAPAN AND CHINA
DIED AT SEA, MARCH 3, 1927

SERMON WAS PREACHED BY
SECRETARY ALLEN R. BARTHOLOMEW, D. D., LL. D.

PROFESSOR GEORGE WARREN RICHARDS, D. D., LL. D., *Presiding*
PRESIDENT CHARLES E. CREITZ, D. D., *Offering Prayer*

REVEREND WILLIAM EDWIN HOY, D. D., LL. D.

He Being Dead Yet Speaketh

"He died, but by his faith he is speaking to us still."

Hebrews 11: 4 (Moffat Translation)

IT was my privilege to live and labor in the closest fellowship with our dear Dr. Hoy for a period of almost forty years. Our souls were knit with a friendship that will never die. This man of God, early in life, was chosen by the Lord as an Apostle to the Far East, and he continued faithful in His service until death. I know the burdens he carried on his heart for the Church he loved. He was one of the most self-effacing missionaries with whom I ever came in contact. His heart was in his work, and the size of it can be seen in his great achievements. He had a simple, childlike faith, unswerving, enthusiastic, and in the strength of it he lived and died for the Master. No task was too great for his willing soul to perform. He was an untiring worker. He gladly spent and was spent for others. He did not count his life dear unto himself. His writings breathe a religious depth and fervor that is seldom found in current literature. Do you wish to know the secret of it? There is a law in the natural world that the amount of light and heat a planet receives, depends on its nearness to the sun. The nearer it is to the sun the more light and warmth it receives. This same law holds in the spiritual world, and finds a living proof in the life of our missionary Hoy. He lived near to

Christ, and his whole career was aflame with the light of Jesus. Of a truth it may be said of him, "He was a bright and shining light" among the children of men.

His Message to the Church

It is my wish that you shall hear Dr. Hoy, and not me, speak at this Memorial Service. He has a message for us as I re-read it from his many letters which are a rich legacy to the Church. Some one must write the story of the life and labors of this man of God during the long period of forty-two years. There is a wealth of material at hand for this purpose. I know of no missionary who has made a richer contribution to the cause of Foreign Missions. There is a current of soul-agony coursing through all his writings. He had an intense passion, a quenchless thirst, for souls. And this made itself manifest as soon as he came in personal contact with the heathen world. He agonized in tears with God and the Church for help to lead men to Christ. You cannot get away from this compelling power. The key-note to it all I find in the words: "Let us continue to grow. To stand still with present attainments is not worthy of us. We can do much better work than we are doing."

A Pioneer in School Work

From the leadings of the divine providence, we know now that Dr. Hoy was destined to be the pioneer missionary of our Church in educational work in the Orient. In the fall of 1885, after one of the evening sessions of Potomac Synod, Brother Hoy, then on the eve of his departure for

Japan, sat in conversation with that peerless teacher, Dr. Thomas G. Apple. During their conversation, Dr. Apple said: "Well, Brother Hoy, I suppose after you get out there you will start a college and a seminary?" The words fell like a seed upon fruitful soil. "On my way to Japan," Dr. Hoy wrote, "the question of mission schools was ever on my mind." From that time forward he determined to convert the idea into actuality. However, neither of these two men were aware that their hopes and purposes were in answer to prayer. In far-off Sendai, there was a servant of Christ, the Rev. Masayoshi Oshikawa, who carried on an independent work in the north of Japan. It became plain to his mind that in order to spread the Gospel message, he must have help, both in men and means. He went to Tokyo, and made his needs known to the United Church of Christ. About this time our Board of Foreign Missions issued an appeal for a third missionary. Student William Edwin Hoy applied, and he was sent out in the fall of 1885. By a strange providence, upon his arrival in Japan, he was met by Mr. Oshikawa who soon got his consent to locate at Sendai. Imagine the two strangers on that long journey of 250 miles! Unlike the two men on the way to Emmaus; they knew that Christ was by their side; and like them, the fire of a holy cause burnt in their hearts.

The Humble Start

What led these men of faith and prayer to start the Sendai Training School, and to maintain it at a cost of much toil and self-sacrifice? They saw the need of pastors and evangelists to enter the open door of service. They felt that

the specific work of the Church was to cover the earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. They knew that the fountain head of the Church's wisdom and life centers in the Theological Seminary. As the little streams that start from the mountain top form the rivers which water the plains below, so the school of the prophets determines the character and life of the Church. With these real convictions at hand, to inspire confidence in their new work, they began in a humble way to instruct a few young men of piety and ability. To the credit of brother Hoy let it be said, that he fed and clad six poor students for the first year at his own expense. He met them in an old dingy house, in a solitary part of the city, without stove in the winter save the little heat from a charcoal fire.

Now the task was no longer to find his sphere of labor, or to gather students, but to acquaint the Church with the needs of the work. His appeals for help were ever on a high spiritual plane. "I am more and more convinced of the value of prayerful forethought and systematic self-denial—and it is scriptural, too. For God's sake let us try whether it will not succeed. It will take time and labor. And for every '*growth*' the seed must surely be sown somewhere by somebody. My own success is, of course, beyond controversy. Others can and ought to practice the same on a small scale, at least; and many persons will do so, if we work the matter earnestly and faithfully."

He Challenges the Church

He had a burning zeal for the Tohoku Gakuin, now North Japan College. One of the proofs of it is still stand-

ing. I refer to the John Ault Memorial Dormitory, paid for at a great sacrifice by Mr. and Mrs. Hoy with a small inheritance received from her parents. And all this time the Church at home was turning a deaf ear to his appeals. Indeed certain members of the Board tried to persuade him that he should preach, rather than teach, the truths of the Gospel. To this he replied: "For the future good of Japan and the progress of God's kingdom I had rather lay down my life for the Gakuin than for the present preaching of the Gospel, and I speak and make my vow advisedly. My resolution is made simply in the love and fear of Almighty God. I have lost time and energy by trying in vain to get help from home. God forgive me for the delay. In a new and more intense struggle I shall find my monastery, my absorption in my Father's call is certain. Hundreds here are witness to its reality. Some one must do the work and bear the burden. I am ready, Lord Jesus, I am ready. I shall neither argue nor urge any longer. I go to work." And so he did, with a breaking heart, and the result was his health was undermined and he had to quit work for a season. Indeed his health was so much broken, superinduced by living in an unfit Japanese house, that he took the Board to task for not exercising more faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There was a time, in the early years of our work in Japan, when some people in the Church, and I infer also certain members of the Board, had the mistaken idea that the missionaries should not erect foreign houses, but live in Japanese houses. It was to combat this false notion that Dr. Hoy made this statement: "There is legislation enough to support twenty missionaries, but not enough action to support five. Talk! Talk! School boys' talk! But to act well requires the

Grace of God." Only a Secretary of a Board, with a zeal for God and a love for souls, can fully appreciate a piercing arrow like that, for it is only too true, and we might just as well admit it, that if all the motions and resolutions of a Board or General Synod were actions, the glory of the Lord would flood the world and all men could see the salvation of our God.

His Demands Were Reasonable

I want to bear testimony to one outstanding virtue in the demands of Dr. Hoy for help, and that is he was never extravagant in his plans. They were always extremely simple and economical. Look at the modest home he occupied at Sendai. Recall the plain old school buildings. When the time came for the erection of these buildings there was evidently a desire on the part of the Board to provide on a larger scale for the future expansion of the school. This meant delay and it was so construed by Dr. Hoy. I find that he took the Board to task for it. He wrote: "Some of you are planning an elaborate building for the future. Nonsense! Now is the time for us. The future of Japan belongs to the native Christians. Our Mission is entitled to a good theological seminary: and without one, we should be merely an *assistant* mission to the others. We have a grand theological inheritance and individuals, and we can make it count for much in Japan. Surely it were a noble thing for us to start, equip, and donate a theological seminary to the Japanese Christians. This can be done if the Reformed Church will give us now $5000. This is not a large sum to ask for such a work from so large a Church as

ours. May not we realize our fondest hopes? Somehow I feel that these $5000 will be raised soon." Thank God the Church did respond as is evident from this dulciana strain in a later letter: "It is with feelings of gladness that I note the increasing interest in our little Training School. You know I began it in faith. God has been with it and is now raising up helpers at home. Blessed be His name. To labor for the Japanese in the name of Christ is a source of great spiritual joy."

Our First Exchange of Letters

After I became a member of the Board of Foreign Missions and its Secretary in June, 1887, I wrote my first letter to the Japan Mission. Brother Hoy was then the Secretary, and he replied on August 24th in a most cordial spirit: "Your first letter came yesterday. I read it to the members of the Mission. We all felt that a new missionary brother was writing out of the fulness of his heart, and that the new Secretary has a soul of love for souls. We welcome you, then, as our new official correspondent, and more than that, as a personal friend and correspondent in the holy cause of Foreign Missions. We pray God's blessing upon you and your office. May the Lord give unto us all His grace to do His will in Japan."

In this same letter Dr. Hoy made a confidant of me, by telling me of the sweet secret in his heart; and since so long a time has now elapsed, and he himself many years ago made public the secret, I feel at liberty to tell you what it was: "As you well know I came to Japan as a single missionary. This arrangement, however, is not to last much

longer. I am now engaged to Miss Ault of our Mission, and we are to be married on the 27th of December." After those two loving hearts were united as one at the altar of marriage, they made a new and complete surrender of their lives to God in service for the Japanese and Chinese and they were faithful in their holy calling until the time of his departure suddenly came at sea on March third, during his last voyage to the homeland.

In Favor of a United Church

Dr. Hoy from the very beginning of his work in Japan was in favor of a United Church of Christ for the Japanese Christians. He did not hesitate to say that "Christ and souls have become a thousand fold more to me than the Reformed Church, and as a foreign missionary I could serve almost any Board." It was his conviction that the Japanese were coming out strongly for one Church in Japan. At that time a prominent elder of our Church wrote to him urging the organization of a Reformed Classis, to which he replied: "Impossible just now. Pity that man or woman or Church whose personal sense of *mine* would withhold an offering to Foreign Missions because we have no distinctively Reformed Classis in Japan. The 'I am the *resurrection* and the *life*' is more than this *dead* charity." There can be no doubt but that the spirit of Jesus, exemplified in the work of Foreign Missions, is the great unifying principle among Christian workers in all lands. It certainly has been the impelling influence to unite Christians on the Mission Fields into the one Church of Christ. Those united Churches of Christ in Japan, China and India, are a standing rebuke to

the divisive forces at work among the believers in America and Europe. If the work of Foreign Missions had no other results to show, this bringing together of Christians into one Church of Christ would be an object lesson to those who do not believe in the unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace, but prefer to live apart in their own separate camps.

He Had a Passion for Souls

If ever there was a foreign missionary with an evangelistic zeal and devotion, that man was our Dr. Hoy. He made frequent trips on foot with his associate Rev. K. Yoshida. On one of these pedestrian trips he writes: "It was our aim to visit people in their homes and bring the Gospel to them in a most direct way. With Bibles and tracts in our knapsacks and 'the holy hope of youth' in our hearts, we began a week's most earnest work. The first evening we held a lecture meeting. This was well attended and a great deal of interest was manifested. The next day we visited farmers and talked with them about Jesus. In the evening a man who was deeply impressed threw open his large house and invited the neighbors to come in. We had a pleasant social gathering first, and afterwards a good religious meeting. I feel confident much good was done then and there. A man who was to receive baptism came some six miles to see us and to meet us. But he would not consent to being baptized there. We must come to the village, and he and his whole household would be baptized in the presence of all the villagers. So early the next morning we went to his house. At three o'clock that morning the earnest old man had sent out a youth on horseback to call the people of the neighboring hamlets

to the Christian meeting at his home. The simple joy and zeal of this old man was, I think, an inspiration to Brother Yoshida and myself in our sermons. In the presence of this early congregation I baptized the three couples of that household—grandfather and wife, son and wife, and grandson and his promised wife. It was an impressive scene, and we tried to press home upon our audience the beautiful spirit of it all. Thus we went from village to village, from house to house, bringing the word of God, and receiving many more invitations to preach in private houses than we could accept." He concludes his letter with these significant words: "A careful estimate seems to point out that seven-eighths of the people live in the country, in villages and towns. Oh! What a field of immortal souls! I long to go to them with the simplicity of the gospel. Pray for them."

He Blazed the Path of Duty for Us

With an ever deepening sense of the vastness of the field in Japan and the ripening of the harvest this dear brother broke out in this severe but just rebuke: "For myself *I will not* work many years longer for a Church that refuses to be obedient to the plainest voice of God. We are doing our duty to the utmost and we have a God-given right to expect both Board and Church to stand by us. We have hardly enough courage left to make known our wants, for it is in vain to make any request. There is a terrible sin somewhere, or else there is no God. Don't you know that this lethargy of the Home Church hangs like a millstone around my neck? If people loved God or *really* believed in God and wished to follow Him, they could not neglect that larger

and darker portion of the human race which is in the darkness of idolatry. I care not for doctrine; I would not fight two seconds for a catechism or creed, but I believe in Christ as a *personal* Redeemer, and I own the right of the heathen world to the *love* of the so-called Church of God. These souls hang upon my conscience, and the sinful neglect of our Home Church also clouds my spirit. Yours at the throne of grace for a sick Church and a dead world. Oh, God, how can Thy people remain so blind and so listless in this work of bringing a sin-sick world to Jesus!" Brethren, the voice of our brother's blood is crying unto heaven, and will not be silenced. "By his faith he is speaking to us still." I find comfort for myself in the thought, that in spite of all the handicaps that were thrown around the years of Dr. Hoy in Japan the results since prove that he was right in blazing the path of duty for our Church and the Board, and how faith wrought with his works and by works his faith was made perfect.

Seeking Health in China

It was in March of the year 1898, that he wrote to Dr. Callender, then Secretary of the Board, that the members of the Mission, and many other friends both missionary and Japanese, had advised that he should rest a few months and seek a change, in order to find relief and a cure, if possible, from the increasingly severe attacks of asthma, "So I expect to go to China in a few days. Seeking rest and a change, I may also perhaps obtain new light on how and where to locate a Mission in China."

A month later he wrote that the vacation was doing him

much good. The asthma had not troubled him since he left Japan. What he saw and heard in Shanghai was of great use to him in mental and spiritual things. He began to write a series of eighteen letters on China for the Church papers, which gave the Board and the Church an insight into the great spiritual needs of the people of that vast empire. Then and there the Lord was calling him. He wrote to the Secretary: "I cannot get rid of the idea that God is calling me here; but I do not wish to do anything in undue haste. This new conviction is not a mere impulse; nay, it is rather a stern sense of duty. China, compared with Japan, is exceedingly repulsive to me as a place of residence. This feeling, however, makes me the more careful to watch for the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It is time for our Church to take hold of our proposed Mission in China; the sooner, the better."

The Beginning of a New Mission

The members of the Board had wrestled for a number of years with the question, "Shall we establish a Mission in China?" It is a long and painful story to me, and I shall not weary you with it. However, I must tell you, that I see the guiding hand of Providence in the planting of our China Mission. Of its beginnings, struggles and progress I shall not speak, except to say that Dr. Hoy chose the Province of Hunan, the last one of all the provinces in China to open its doors to the missionary and recently the first one that closed it to the missionaries. There are three words that tell the story of our China Mission. They are *sacrifice*, *service* and *success*. I prize it as a great honor and a rare privilege that my labors as Secretary should be coeval with the origin of

the work of our Church in China. Before he settled at Yochow City we hear Dr. Hoy saying: "Let us not be afraid to work hard for these people. Jesus died and was made alive forevermore for just such people, as well as for you and me; but they may never learn of it in some parts of China unless you and I are willing to tell them what Christ has done for the whole world." With an unfaltering courage he wrote during the time of the Boxer Troubles, "Let us not close our eyes to the fact that in China, during the last four months, we may find many an example worthy of a St. Paul —Love to God and simple obedience to His will and commands should be enough for us in going forward into China."

A Display of Heroism

The heroic element has ever been dominant in the missionary career of Dr. Hoy. Let me refer to one instance only. For some time after his arrival at Yochow he was alone; Mrs. Hoy and the children did not join him until a year later. He lived in a small rented house, having covered the cracks in the wall with paper and old quilts. Four times in three months he was molested by robbers. The officials sent 20 soldiers to guard the house, but he wrote, "These slept and we were never safe." One night a robber dug through the back wall, went up to the boy's room and tried to get in. The boy heard him, yelled at him, and came running into the room where Dr. Hoy slept. He went with the boy to see how the thief had made his way into the house. He wrote: "I found a Chinese sword. This I took into my room and placed it near my little cot. Just before falling asleep again, I reached out and touched the cold steel. Somehow the cold

chills crept all over my body and the phrase, 'In perils of robbers,' flashed through my mind." This was the experience of our missionary before we had purchased the London Mission Property. Do you blame him for modestly asking, "Where can I find a home for my family so eagerly waiting to join me in China? The little house occupied by Brother Cromer and me, without any yard, and with its surroundings of indescribable filth and odors, would be out of the question. Must my family remain another year in Japan? That I could not think of at all. What was to be done?" My dear friends, we do not know, we cannot tell, the denials, the hardships and the deprivations of this servant of the Lord.

Separation from Loved Ones

One of *the painful experiences* in the work of Missions is *the separation of* the workers from their loved ones in the homeland. The true missionary, as did Dr. and Mrs. Hoy, enters the foreign field for life. There he buries himself in his work. I know the agonies in human hearts that must be lived down on the part of parents and children in their life service in the Orient. To the honor of Dr. and Mrs. Hoy be it ever said that this trial did not ruffle them. They knew they could not serve their Master fully and not remain at their post of duty. That Dr. Hoy was devoted to his work in China, loved the people and the very soil of Lakeside, is voiced in his own words:

"O Lakeside! thee I love; From earth and sky above;
Thy charms appear, From lake and mountain there,
From trees and flowers fair, From birds in purest air,
Joys fill the year."

Dr. Hoy had left instructions with me, that if he died at Yochow, he wanted to be buried there.

My own observation constrains me to say that the missionaries, for a high and holy purpose have gone forth at the greatest sacrifices in order to sow the seed of truth in minds void of it, and to kindle flames of light in hearts cold without it. It is not easy to live in a distant clime, and work among strange peoples and under trying circumstances. But many a missionary does this and makes the best of it. Dr. Hoy did it, without a murmur ever escaping from his lips. He gave his life for the Japanese and Chinese and he was glad to do it. And why did he do it? Hear him: "When I stand before our students, I feel in the depths of my heart that God is breathing into them a new life, and that He will guide that life. There will be strength given to that life for the nation. I see the future sweep of its power as it surges around me. No one can destroy for me the vision of the New China, which God has impressed upon myself forever; for He has called this empire for His own purpose in His Kingdom." And again let Dr. Hoy speak: "Surely in the light of history, we may believe that China has been spared and is now being prepared for a special spiritual purpose by Him, whom we call the God of History and whom we gladly serve; and I believe that he who serves well here serves doubly, because from China, when once redeemed, must go forth mighty forces that will affect the whole human race."

Fine Character Tests

Dr. Hoy had *a thankful heart.* He was ever appreciative of the kind words and loving deeds of his friends. "I

must express my appreciation of what the Board and other friends have done for my wife and children in the homeland. A friend who is a friend in God is a friend indeed, and shows a sympathy that uplifts the soul in the hour of trouble. Had it not been your promptness in remitting to my family, the education of our children would have been much more difficult than it was. In our hard, rigid economy we came to rely upon your promptness and you never failed us. Frequently also your advice to my family was of great service to us. For all these things, and more, we all join in thanking you and our God."

Dr. Hoy had a *spirit of humility* that one feels in reading his annual personal reports. "As I stand before the teachers and students my limitations in language and knowledge, in spiritual power and insight, and in touch with all the phases of life in China, bring that form of discouragement which prompts and tempts a man to step out and make room for a better preacher; but God keeps me in my place and I do the best I can, realizing that without the Lord Jesus Christ one can do nothing. It is the Holy Spirit that quickeneth. If one preaches in his own strength he may well despair; and there is danger of thinking that one's proud strength is as the might of the Lord. Thence cometh a sound of words worse than sounding brass or tinkling cymbal."

Dr. Hoy was also *conscious of his own ability* to serve the Lord in his own day and generation. In the year 1911 the Board had granted him a furlough, but he did not accept. He had only four regular furloughs and a three months' vacation, in his forty-two years of service as a missionary of the Church. "As I look upon the situation and feel keenly the demands of the work and failure from home to meet them

adequately, it would be a sin for me to leave now—such a sin as to render me exceedingly unhappy at home and interfere with my best usefulness there. The best time of my life has come. The heavy outside work that was so necessary during the first years at Yochow City and later at Lakeside has been done. I am much freer today than formerly for better work in school and in Church, and I long to keep the privilege of further unbroken service in the field."

Dr. Hoy threw *his whole soul into the work.* He was relentless in his efforts to lift up the Church that we might see the dire needs of a dying humanity as he saw them and to do real sacrificial giving for the sake of Him who gave all He had, even His very life blood for the redemption of the whole world. At the close of his twenty-five years of service he wrote in his report to the Board: "The world is tired of him who does his duty as a mere official, and is hungry for the living man. It wants more than a talker; it seeks the prophet. It wants more than a wooden sign post—it longs for a great heart who knows the ways of God, who knows the Lord in the travail of His own soul, and who glories in the Cross. If Christ be not formed in me, then will my preaching and my teaching be in vain. If the holy splendors of grace shine not through my life, I cannot lead men to seek the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; if my look, and my act, and my word, come not forth from love as a stream as clear as crystal, I cannot point with might in the Spirit to the love of God the Father; and if my relations with men are not tempered in the joy and peace of God, all my testimony will not bring men together in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. This ideal today is thrust upon me with the weight of years, and woe is me, if I fail to strive to attain what I know is only

too true in missionary life in Japan and China."

His Last Message to the Church

This is not the time and place for me to speak of the present critical situation in China. Our own Mission has been hard hit, the hardest of any Church. Of all the Provinces in China, Hunan has made the cleanest sweep of the missionaries—its best and truest friends. However, these servants of Christ were not driven out by the local people, *but by imported agitators.* What the future has in store for our Church in China no one can tell. In one of his last letters to me, Dr. Hoy has left a testimony that we do well to heed at a time when there is so much distress in China, as well as disheartenment among some of our own Church members. He wrote: "Whatever may come to us, please remember that Mrs. Hoy and I do not regret our having served so long in this land. Service has been joy. One year and a half ago we returned to a *Changed and Rapidly Changing China.* We may be too old to readjust ourselves to the new environment; but surely this inability must not embitter us. Both God and man have been gracious to us all our years in this land of the 'Far East.' In all our efforts we have tried to hold up Christ and Him crucified; and we still believe in Him who was sent into the world to save those who will receive Him. Should we be driven out tomorrow, our labor in the Lord has not been in vain. In these discouraging days there are many in China who by letter and by personal calls testify to what the Christ preached or taught means. For all this we take heart and rejoice for the service the Lord has owned. Let not the Board and the Church become discouraged. God's right arm

of salvation has not been shortened. The *Church* still lives."

He Was a Modern Paul

Dear Brethren: Our beloved friend and co-worker has come to the end of his life's journey. The time of his departure, or *embarkation,* was at hand. Our Church has lost much by his untimely death. He was true to the call of God, loyal to the service of humanity, and faithful unto death. And here I find the crowning glory of his life. I regard Dr. Hoy as a Modern Paul. The portrayal of his missionary experiences is not unlike that of the great apostle to the Gentiles. He did not live for self, but for service. He left a will, but no estate. He gave away all he had, but he kept his soul. When I think of his work in time, his influence on the world, and his reward in heaven, I am led to confess, "There is one thing in the world better than making a living, and that is making a life." This is the real motive in the lives of all true Christians. Will you not join me in the wish:

"I ask no heaven, till earth be Thine,
No glory-crown while work of mine remaineth here.
When earth shall shine among the stars,
Her sins wiped out, her captives free—Her voice a music
unto Thee,
For crown, *more work give Thou to Me,* Lord here am I."

Amen.

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